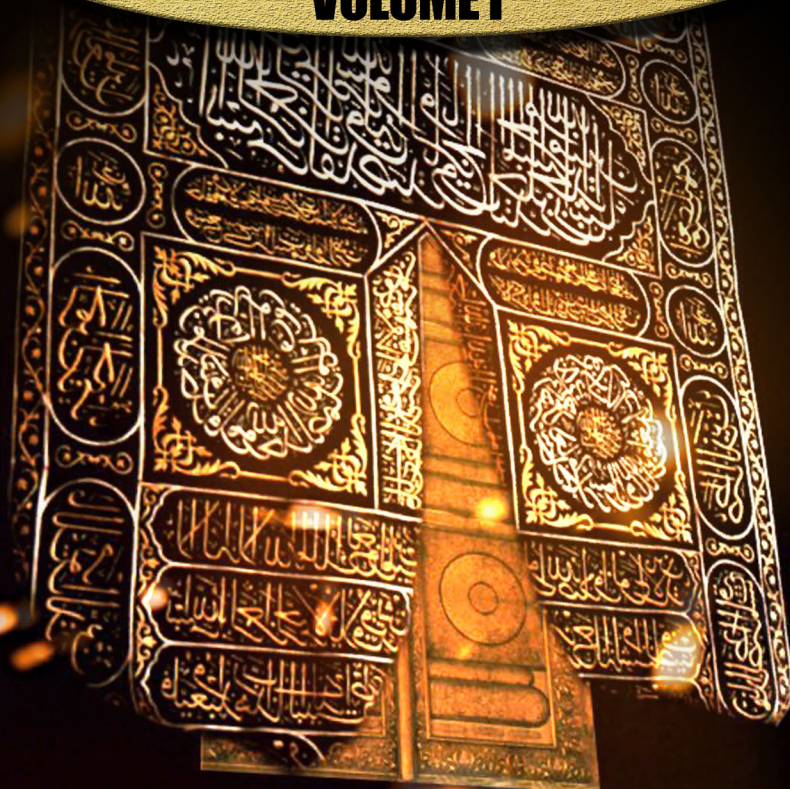


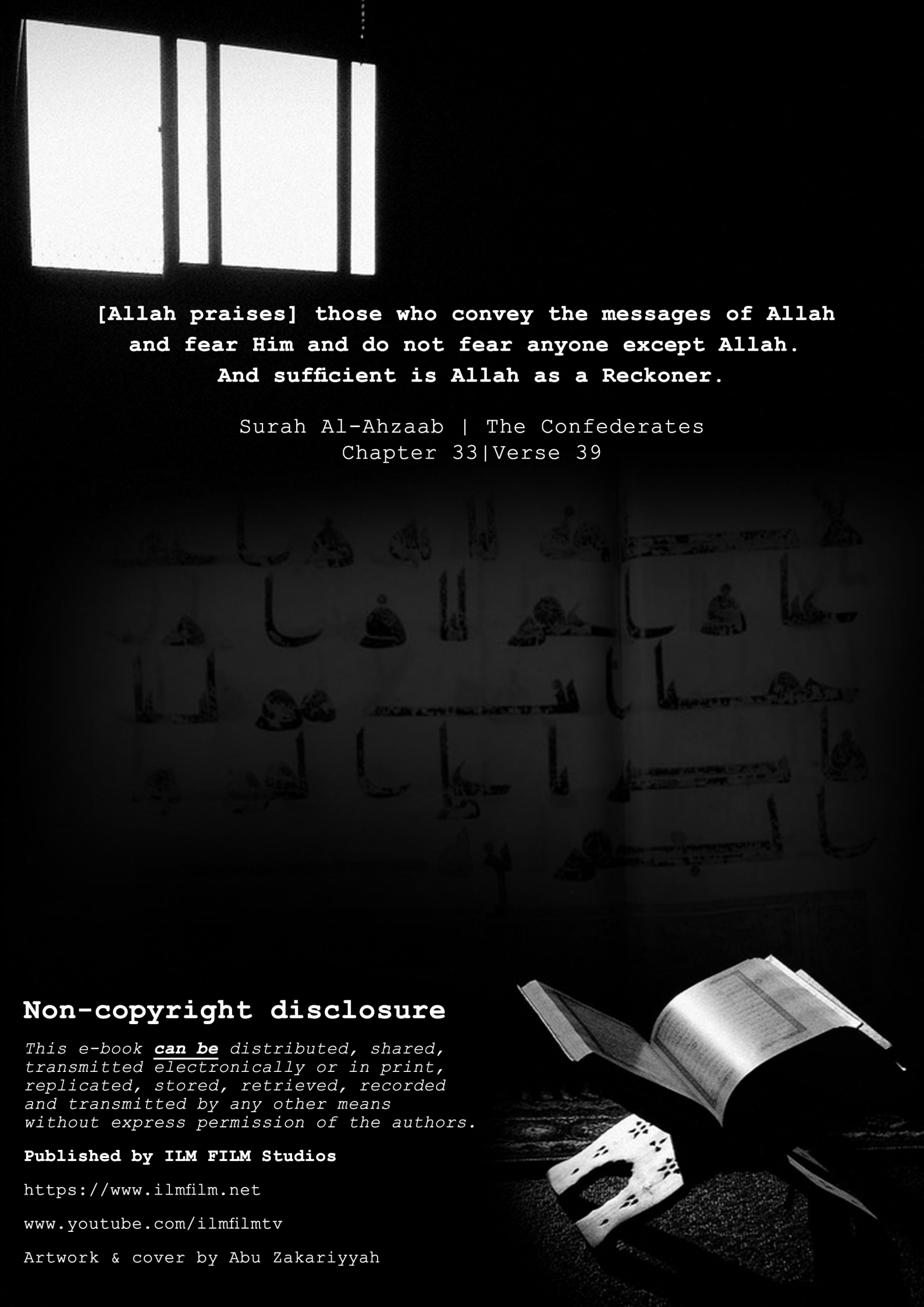


GREAT MUSLIM LIVES

VOLUME I



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[Allah praises] those who convey the messages of Allah
and fear Him and do not fear anyone except Allah.
And sufficient is Allah as a Reckoner.

Surah Al-Ahzaab | The Confederates
Chapter 33 | Verse 39

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Foreword

May the Peace and Salutations of Allah be upon our beloved Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)
The Trustworthy, The Final Prophet and Messenger of Allah.

“Until the lion learns to speak, the tales of the hunter will be told”

They reminds us of our defeat, our degradation and our deviation from the pathways of progress, piety and prosperity. In such times it may be difficult to draw inspiration and find courage in our identity as contemporary Muslims, however history reminds us that Islam has always been strengthened and supported by men and women of integrity, virtue and of exemplary accomplishments.

It is with a heart full of optimism, hope and love for Al-Islaam that we present to the reader a rich catalogue of contemporary biographies, each one recounting the life and legacy of a great Muslim personality.

Collectively, all of our subjects have demonstrated outstanding will and determination to cherish and champion the legacy and beauty of Al-Islaam in its purest form.

QARI 'ABDUL-BASIT 'ABDUS-SAMAD (1927–1988)

THE VOICE OF MAKKAH

SON OF THE SOIL

Egypt the home of outstanding Quran recitation and the preservation of the Quranic sciences of Tajweed (elocution), Tarteel (recital) and Tahfeez (memorization).

From this constellation of brilliant voices and exceptionally rare talent, God has blessed Egypt with a rich heritage and a treasure trove of unique (Quran) reciters with legendary voices such as that of Sheikh Muhammed Rif'at or the golden melodies of Sheikh Mustapha Isma'il and the timeless wonder that is Sheikh Mahmûd Khalil Al-Husarî. Egypt was also the home and birthplace of the renowned Sheikh and Qari Muhammad Siddîq Al-Minshâwî.

Each reciter had his very own unique talent and commanded the admiration and respect of millions of believing souls, they are dear to even the coldest of hearts and respected by the most eloquent and enlightened minds, indeed they are loved and imitated, by the very young to the very experienced, in equal measures.



But even within a galaxy of heavenly lamps, there is always the piercing light, of one unique star, in fact, to most Egyptians and arguably for most in the Muslims world, at large, that star had an undeniably, beautiful and unique voice one that would become so iconic and so universally accepted that it came to be known as the voice of Makkah, a voice that is familiar to listeners from Libya all the way to London, it is imitated from New York to New Delhi and it is revered and held in high regard from the enlightened city of Al-Madinah to the blessed sanctuary of Al Quds, in Palestine.

More than any other reciter of his generation and certainly above all others since his era, Sheikh 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad has come to be regarded, not only as the most famous Qari in the world but as one of the most inspirational and unique champions of the sacred discipline.

Humble origins Qari 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad was born in 1927, he came from a scholarly family who resided in the small village of Armant which is situated, near the eternal spring that is commonly known as the river Nile. His father was of Kurdish decent and his mother was an Egyptian Arab. Even during his tender childhood years the great Qari, had an intense love and an attachment to the Holy Quran.

As he later recalls he would travel over three kilometers daily in order to get to a neighboring village where he could sit in a local coffee house and concentrate, deeply as he listened to the radio he would listen when they began the day's broadcast of Quran recitations that was being read by some of the greatest and most celebrated Quran reciters of the day.

He would be enthusiastic and inspired as he absorbed the melodiously rich and rhythmic recitation of Sheikh Muhammad Rif'at, with the hope and ambition of one day following in his hero's footsteps.

But the elder brothers of the young 'Abd Al-Basit had by now, already expressed their fervent, desire to pursue studies in the scholarly tradition of their forefathers at the prestigious University of Al-Azhar in Egypt, but unlike his elder brothers the young 'Abd Al-Basit would express his desire to memorize the Quran by heart and to one day achieve his dream of becoming a Qari, a devoted disciple and dedicated reciter of the Holy Quran.

UNDER THE WINGS OF A MENTOR

The young 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad had his father's approval and full support. In actual fact it was under his father's caring and loving presence that the 10 year old prodigy came to memorize the entire Quran by heart, word for word, from cover to cover. The following year, his father took him to the village of Asfoon, where he enrolled him into a Quranic School where the young 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad excelled and eventually received his certification upon having mastered the seven modes recitations and a short while later, the 10 authoritative recitations of the Glorious Quran under the expert tutelage of his mentor Sheikh Muhammad Salim.

It was not long after this that his teacher, would permit this young protégé to accompany him whenever he attended, religious ceremonies, and gatherings in which, the Holy Quran, would be rehearsed publicly. Yet despite his tender age and lack of experience at the early age of 14 Sheikh Abdul Basit AbdusSamad was encouraged, by his mentor to participate in these public rehearsals. It was in these early days that the unusual talent and unique gift of Qari Abdul Basit began to be noticed.



HEART AND SOUL OF EGYPT

However it was not until 1950, during religious celebrations in Cairo that events suddenly took a fateful turn for the young and upcoming Qari. During these very special functions and gatherings, the audience would listen to the greatest and most seasoned performers of the day, many of whom travelled into Cairo from the famous village of Tanta, a place that is renowned to this day, for its exceptional Quran reciters and scholars.

At only 23 years of age and somewhat unknown in larger cities, such as Cairo, the young hopeful was intimidated and reluctant to attend the ceremony, however with the encouragement of his senior companions and with the approval of his mentor he eventually accompanied them to Cairo. It was to be a day that would mark history in Egypt, a bright new day in which the voice of Qari 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad, like the splendid rays of light emitted by of the rising sun, would penetrate the very heart and soul of Egypt. Qari 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad was mostly anxious and relatively discreet in the overwhelming presence of senior practitioners and authoritative personalities that were present at the gathering.

The Imam of Lady Zainab's Mosque, Sheikh Ali Subay, had noticed the presence of this young man sitting amongst some of the greatest reciters and most famous memorizers of Glorious Quran, yet somehow unsuspectingly, the young Qari would be summoned to recite for a duration of only ten minutes as a short opening rehearsal while the audiences warmed up for the main performers to commence. Gracefully, the young Qari began with the name of Allah and proceeded to recite some verses from the Holy Quran. This was to be a defining moment, a Golden moment, that would propel him into the center, of a universe that had previously been exclusively for the senior Quran reciters and devotees of the day, but now – at only 23 years of age, Qari 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad had captivated the heart of Cairo and totally mesmerized his audience.

His 10 minute rehearsal eventually lasted for an entire hour and a half owing to the insatiable and overwhelming requests from the audience.

THE BLOSSOMING FLOWER

Qari 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad as an extraordinarily gifted talent who despite his young age attracted a great deal of attention and yielded a significant degree of respect. Allah had endowed him with a beautiful voice and the ability to convey a deep and meaning understanding of the scripture through his melodious and heartfelt recitations.

A year following his participation in the religious ceremony at the Grand Mosque of Lady Zainab in Cairo, the young 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad would enroll himself into a very challenging, exceptionally selective radio audition which was broadcast on one of the main radio stations, in Country. Sitting on the board of senior assessors was the notable scholar and critic Sheikh Ad-Dabah who had initially encouraged the young talent to enroll for the audition. Other adjudicators included the knowledgeable scholar Sheikh Muhammad Shaltût as well as the respected and renowned Quran reciter Sheikh Mahmûd Ali Al Bannâ.



By the grace of Allah the young Qari had surpassed all expectations he did not fail to impress his assessors by successfully passing the examination at the first attempt. From that moment onward his voice was broadcast across the airwaves at eight in the evening, every Saturday.

Soon the inhabitants of his village in Armant would begin to gather around a small radio in order to listen to their beloved son, as he embellished the airwaves with his ornamental and exquisitely beautiful recitation of the Glorious Quran.

A RISING STAR

In 1952 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad became the official reciter of the grand Masjid of Imam Ash-Shafee'i, and in 1985 he also became the official reciter at the Grand Masjid of Imam Hussein, thereby succeeding the late and great Sheikh Mahmûd Ali Al Bannâ.

During his lifetime he was granted the honorific title of - As-Sawtu Makkah – (The Voice of Makkah) having enjoyed the rare privilege and honour of reciting the Glorious Quran from Islam's holiest Mosque and sanctuary - Al Masjid Al Haram - located in modern day Saudi Arabia.

He also had the distinction of reciting before thousands of believers from all over the world in Islam's second holiest Mosque - Masjid Al Nabawy - in the enlightened city of Al Madinah.

Qari 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad also founded the - National Union for Reciters - and was subsequently elected by unanimous consensus to champion the initiative by becoming the first president and chairman of the newly formed organization.

In addition to being counted amongst the top five Quran reciters of the latter generations, Qari 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad went on to become the very first reciter to win three consecutive titles at the world Quran recitation championships during the 1970s.

BENEATH THE GOLDEN SMILE

Yet despite his overwhelming fame and his astounding achievements the Sheikh maintained a very pleasant and kind disposition. Some of his closest friends and companions would often recount the instances when the Sheikh, would return home after his international travels often times to be greeted by long lines of people who would come to him asking for help, yet he would always assist them and listen to their concerns and although he granted them large sums of money from his own personal earnings, the Sheikh would still refrain from requesting any financial compensation for his recitation of the Quran.



We have some rare insight and intimate pointers into the character and personal life of the late Sheikh 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad, in an article published in 1966 by an English lecturer at the University of Al Azhar – Egypt.

In this publication the late Sheikh is described in the following words:

“(He was a) very simple soft-hearted man. He never forgot his friends, however rich or poor they may be. When sitting in his chauffeur-driven limousine, he loved to sit next to his driver whom he called Akh Masood (Brother Masood)”

[Razack 1966:6]

As a result of his heartfelt recitation and his deeply rooted love of the scripture, it is reported that many people had embraced the Faith after having listened to and internalized the recitation of Sheikh 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad.

In fact, during an interview broadcast on national television. The Sheikh recounts an incident that took place while he was accompanying the Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nassir who at the time had an audience with some Russian dignitaries and senior ranking officers. The Sheikh recalls that after he had completed his rehearsal of the Holy Quran, he witnessed a significant number of Russian officers who were moved to tears despite not having understood the Quranic Arabic that was being recited before them.

TOWARDS THE GARDEN

However, towards the latter part of the twentieth century, the great Sheikh 'Abd Al-Basit 'Abd As-Samad would spend his final few days on this earth. He passed away on Wednesday November the 30th in 1988 and his passing away was mourned by dignitaries, patrons of the arts, ordinary men, women and children from all walks of life, across the Muslim world and beyond.

Yet even after his death, his beautiful voice continues to touch the hearts and penetrates the souls of his audiences. His awesome recitations continue to live in the collective Muslim hearts and minds, his life story is an outstanding inspiration for subsequent generations of Quran students, listeners and reciters from across the world.

By the Divine Grace of Allah. Qari 'Abd Al-Basit Muhammad 'Abd As-Samad spent a vast proportion of his adult life teaching the words of the Glorious Quran and transmitting it's beautiful and rhythmic verses to audiences around the world and at home. He championed the fine science and discipline of Quranic recitation, through the - National Union of Reciters - and through his timeless studio recordings.

May God grant him the light of the Quran on the day of Judgment and may he be raised to the highest ranks in Paradise..

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PAL

AL-HAJJ MALIK AL-SHABBAZ, MALCOLM X (1925–1965)

FROM MECCA WITH LOVE

BEFORE DAWN

Malcolm Little was born in Omaha in 1925. He was one of six children born to Earl and Louise Little. Malcolm's father was a Baptist preacher and his mother was a writer for Marcus Garvey's newspaper, but due to their defiant stance against racism and their staunch activism within the black community, the family was compelled to abandon their home and to relocate to Milwaukee Wisconsin in 1926, but shortly thereafter circumstances compelled them to relocate once more, this time they settled in Lansing Michigan.

However, as in their previous homes the family suffered frequent harassment and intimidation at the hands of local white supremacists. Soon after they moved to Lansing, their new home was burnt to the ground. Tragically, the family was never compensated - for their loss.

This traumatic incident would in the tender heart of Malcolm Little, entrench a bitter sentiment of vengefulness and abhorrence for the white power structure. Unfortunate as it was, this tragedy was not to be the last for Malcolm and his family.



THE AWAKENING STORM

On a fateful September night in 1931, when Malcolm was only six years old, his father was brutally murdered and dismembered by some local members of the Klu Klux Klan. His mutilated remains were found on a railway track the next morning.

The homicide was dismissed by the authorities and officially ruled to be a mere accident, some even implied that Malcolm's father had in fact committed suicide but Malcolm now a 6 year old orphan, would grow up with the conviction that his father was murdered by a group of white -supremacists. The incident was not a novelty to Malcolm or to his siblings, as three of their uncles had already been killed by racist thugs.

In 1938, seven years following the murder of his father, Malcolm's mother suffered a nervous breakdown and was sent to a mental unit in Kalamazoo State Hospital. She remained there for almost a quarter of a century, secluded from her home and family. Sadly, resulting from this painful course of events, Malcolm and his siblings were split up and sent to live in different foster homes.

SUNRISE IN BOSTON

The young Malcolm excelled at West Junior High, where he was the only black student in attendance, in fact during the 7th grade he was elected class president, however he left school and abandoned his studies in the 8th grade when his English teacher had informed him that black boys could not become lawyers, such were the accepted norms of society.

Understandably Malcolm felt that the white world afforded no place for an intelligent and industrious black man, regardless of his ambitions and aptitude. Having dropped out of school at the age of 14, he sought new opportunities in Boston, where he settled with his half-sister – Ella. She resided in the middle class locality of Roxbury.

DETROIT RED AND THE HARLEM NIGHTS

Then after a short time in Boston, Malcolm moved to Harlem in 1943. Soon after his arrival in Harlem the young Malcolm became acquainted with the underground scene and became an initiate into the dark underworld of drug dealing, gambling, extortion, robbery and pimping.

Malcolm was dazzled by the night life in downtown Harlem, which he used to call “The Technicolor Bazar”.

At only 17 years of age, Malcolm already had a street reputation and a significant network of criminal contacts and acquaintances in Harlem.

As his profile developed in Harlem, he operated under the street name “Detroit Red”, so called because of the reddish hair he inherited from his Scottish grandfather. But by 1946, at the age of 20 he was convicted on charges of burglary and sentenced to a ten year prison term.

He eventually served almost seven years at Charlestown State Prison and was released in 1952.



THE PRODIGIOUS PROTÉGÉ

As an inmate, Malcolm soon earned himself the nickname of “Satan” because of his intense hatred for God and religion. In jail Malcolm met John Elton Bembry, who was commonly known as ‘Bimbi’. Malcolm had a profound respect for Bimbi, he was a self-educated convict who had reformed himself and taken to serious studies and enlightenment while in prison.

Under the guidance and encouragement of Bimbi, Malcolm had developed an appetite for books that can only be described as Epicurean in proportion and such literary indulgence that eventually led to his weakening eyesight and heavy stigmatism, subsequently resulting in his much needed use of glasses, yet despite this setback - Malcolm consumed knowledge like a desert rose consumes sunlight.

By the time he had served his sentence, Malcolm had read large volumes of classical text, he had engaged in many prison debates with visiting scholars from Harvard and MIT, while in his spare time he had even handwritten the entire English dictionary.

During his seven year term in custody, Malcolm received a letter from his brother Philbert, informing Malcolm that he had;

“Discovered the natural religion of the black man”

Philbert and the rest of Malcolm’s siblings had now joined a movement called “The Nation of Islam” and they were now inviting Malcolm to join them. But to this invite, Malcolm responded with fierce opposition. A short while following the first correspondence, Malcolm received another letter, this time it was from his other brother - Reginald.

Malcolm thought that the letter was some sort of clever strategy – or a hype, written in coded language to help him escape prison, this feeling excited him and gave him a much hope and enthusiasm.

THE BIRTH OF MALCOLM X

In 1948 Malcolm wrote a letter to the leader of the Nation of Islam, seeking council. Elijah Muhammad personally responded to Malcolm's letter, advising him to renounce his criminal past, to submit to Allah and to make an oath that he would never return to his former street life.

This marked the beginning of a friendship between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammed.

In 1950, Malcolm had changed his name to "Malcolm X", he also began to espouse radical ideas and racially biased view of the world as he became more and more influenced by the false doctrines and teachings, of Elijah Muhammad.

TEMPLE NUMBER SEVEN

In August 1952, after Malcolm had served his term in jail and was released on parole, he travelled to Chicago intending to pay a personal visit to Elijah Muhammad's in his home. By June 1953, he was promoted to the rank of assistant minister, initially serving at a temple in Detroit. Later that year, he established a new Temple in Boston and by March 1954 he established another Temple in Philadelphia. Then just two months later, he was promoted once more, this time he was given the leadership of Temple Number 7 in Harlem.

Malcolm successfully recruited many supporters and new converts to the Nation of Islam. By 1955, resulting from Malcolm X's enthusiastic drive and compelling rhetoric, thousands of African Americans were now bolstering the ranks of the Nation of Islam, with numbers rising each and every month.



Alarmed by the rapid rise of Malcolm X, the FBI soon opened a file and began to monitor his progress. Malcolm was credited with the organization's dramatic increase in membership from five hundred to over forty five thousand, in the short period of time during which he was initiated as a minister within the movement. Malcolm even inspired the young boxer, Cassius Clay - later known as Muhammad Ali. Encouraging him to join the Nation of Islam, before he became the heavyweight world champion.



And in June 1963, Malcolm organised and headed the - Unity Rally - in Harlem, which was one of America's largest civil rights events. Later that year, the New York Times had reported that Malcolm X was now the second most popular speaker, in the United States.

NINETY DAYS

Successful as he was, Malcom's rising popularity and growing influence began to ruffles a few feathers and provoked some discontent from within the movement. Some members began to suspect that Malcom was becoming even more influential than their leader, Elijah Muhammad. This jealousy and resentment would be the cause of a major rift between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad.

On December the 1st 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated in broad daylight. The nation was in deep mourning. In an interview following the assassination, when asked what his opinions were on the assassination of President Kennedy, Malcom's response was frank and unapologetic. He expressed his opinion that it was a case of "chickens coming home to roost".



This statement prompted a series of reactions from across America and from within the Nation of Islam itself. Malcolm X was condemned by the Nation of Islam and was banned from giving any public lectures for ninety days. Malcolm X now found himself isolated, silenced and abandoned, by his own brothers.

CROSSING THE RUBICON

In March 1964, within a few month of having been silenced by Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm X publicly announced his official departure from the Nation of Islam.



Malcolm also expressed an earnest desire to collaborate with other civil rights leaders and groups. He then established - The Organization for Afro-American Unity - and founded the Muslim Mosque Incorporated. Soon after his exit from the NOI, several Sunni Muslims encouraged Malcolm X to abandon the false doctrines of the NOI and to learn about true Islam. Malcolm accepted their invitation and after careful contemplation and consideration, he embraced orthodox Islam.

FROM MECCA WITH LOVE

In April 1964, Malcolm X embarked on the Hajj, the sacred pilgrimage to the heartland of Islam, in Mecca - modern day Saudi Arabia.

A day after his arrival in Jeddah, Malcolm X was informed that crown Prince Faisal (later to become King Faisal of Saudi Arabia) had extended a personal invite, welcoming Malcolm as an honored guest of the kingdom and in a gesture of brotherhood and kindness, Malcolm was entertained and hosted by Prince Faisal, following the Hajj ceremonies.

Soon after his enlightened journey to Mecca, Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabbazz, as he now came to be known in the Muslim world, embarked on a trail blazing tour of Africa. During these visits he met officials, gave interviews, spoke on national television and on radio stations in various countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sudan, Senegal, Liberia, Algeria and Morocco.



Presidents Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria had each invited Malcolm X to serve as a minister in their governments.

Following a speech at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, the Muslim Students Association honored Malcolm with the Yoruba name Omowale, which means “the son who has returned home”. By the time Malcolm left Africa, he had met with most of the continent’s leaders.

In November 1964, on his way home from Africa, Malcolm X stopped in Paris where he delivered a lecture at the Salle de la Mutualité. A week later, Malcolm X flew to the United Kingdom and on December the 3rd, he participated in a debate at the Oxford Union. Interest in the debate was so high that it was televised across the nation, by the BBC.

Malcolm’s reach and influence had outgrown the racial boundaries set by the Nation of Islam, he was no longer just a civil rights activist, now he became a human rights activist.

Malcom X had expressed his desire to work with other organizations and leaders in order to present a legal case at the international court for human rights, in an unprecedented effort to bring charges against the United States, for its gross human rights violations against the poor marginalized and brutalized African American minority.



Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X met before a press conference following the senate debate on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This meeting marked the start of what many people saw as a bright prospect for a golden union between the two leaders, and a joint effort to cooperate and collaborate with one another.

MALCOLM THE MAN

Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabbazz was remarkably charismatic, he was an eloquent orator and had an impressive physical presence. At six foot three inches tall, he had an imposing yet gentle composure. One journalist described him as;

“Mesmerizingly handsome and always spotlessly well-groomed”

In 1955, Betty Sanders met Malcolm X after one of his lectures. She would soon be attending his lectures more regularly. Yet although they had never discussed marriage before, Malcolm X unexpectedly proposed to Sister Betty over the phone, in January 1958, they were married only two days later and became the proud parents to six beautiful daughters.



AS THE SUN SETS

Malcolm's departure from the Nation of Islam had been preceded by growing tensions between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, particularly over rumors concerning Elijah Muhammad's adulterous relationships with some of his teenage secretaries.

After first ignoring the rumors, Malcolm's suspicions were confirmed when he spoke to Elijah Muhammad's own son, Wallace Muhammad. The suspicions were also validated by the testimonies of some of the young women who had been sexually exploited, by Elijah Muhammad himself.



But by now there were rumors circulating that highly placed members of the NOI were plotting to kill Malcolm X. The strains between Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam increased and soon both public and private threats were being made. In February 1964, an attempt was made to wire Malcolm's car with explosives, but it was unsuccessful.

In the weeks and months to come, Malcolm's wife would receive a string of anonymous phone calls. Each one delivering blood curdling threats. On June the 8th 1964, FBI surveillance recorded a man calling Malcolm X's home and instructing Sister Betty to tell her husband that;

"He's as good as dead"

Also in June 1964, the Nation of Islam sued Malcolm X and attempted to claim his residence in Queens [New York]. Sadly, Malcolm lost his home and the entire family was ordered to vacate the premises, but the Nation of Islam were not yet satisfied. So on February 14th in 1965, Malcolm's home was burned to the ground, all of his children were asleep at the time.



By the Divine Grace of God, Malcolm X and his family survived the attempt, however despite the overwhelming evidence that was available, no one was charged or brought to justice. This was deeply reminiscent of Malcolm's childhood experience, three decades into the tragic past.

The following week, on February the 21st in 1965, during the final hour of his life. Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabbaz was preparing to deliver a lecture in front of the - Organization of Afro-American Unity - in Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom.

In fact, the night before he was due to deliver this lecture, Malcolm X felt uneasy about the event. He had called his wife and the children, telling them to come and visit him the very next day. This was unusual, as by now he was so aware of the imminent threat to his life that he would strictly forbid his family from attending any of his public meetings, but not on this occasion.

Soon after he had greeted the audience, there were screams and distressed voices echoed throughout the hall. An unidentified man seated in the front row then rushed forward and shot Malcolm once in the chest, with a double-barreled sawed-off shotgun. Two other men then charged onto the stage and fired semi-automatic handguns, fatally hitting Malcolm several times at close range.



Malcolm X was pronounced dead at 3:30pm, shortly after arriving at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

On Friday afternoon, his funeral rites and prayers were performed in accordance to orthodox Islamic teachings, by Sheikh Ahmad Hassan, a Sunni cleric who had travelled to the US to serve as Malcolm's spiritual guide and teacher in the final months of his life.

Malcolm died in front of his wife and children, but even in his final moments, he stood before the world fearlessly and selflessly. Courageously fighting to restore the principles of Justice, Liberty and equality.



THE LEGACY OF MALCOLM X

At 39 years old, Malcolm X had lived several lives and experienced several radical but profound transformations in his opinions and convictions. He went from a criminal operating in Harlem's underworld, to becoming a world class advocate for justice. His career unfolded while he was a physical prisoner, but his achievements blossomed when he became a liberator of hearts and an emancipator of minds. His ultimate message grew from that of a Nationalist to the call of a Universalist.



Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabbazz opened America's eyes to the message of Islam, his example opened many hearts to the collective call of brotherhood. His biography demonstrates the universality of Islam for all people, regardless of race or status.

Finally, he rejected racism and embraced racial equality. He submitted himself, in humility and dedication, to The One and Only, God.



GREAT MUSLIM LIVES



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FAISAL IBN 'ABD AL-'AZĪZ ĀL SAUD (1905–1975)

THE KING'S SPEECH

OF ROYAL PEDIGREE

Faisal ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Saud was born in the Royal House of Saud. He was the third son of King 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Saud, the founder of modern day Saudi Arabia.

Faisal's date of birth is not officially confirmed, as birth certificates were unavailable in the region of Hejaz at that time, however some historians have posited that he was born in the year 1905.

Faisal is an old and traditional Arabic name meaning "Sword". He spent much of his early life under the attentive guardianship of his maternal grandfather. His grandfather molded his character and influenced his personality in a very profound way.



CARE AND CULTIVATION

From a very young age, Faisal's mother would habitually encourage and motivate him to cultivate and develop the proud nomadic traits of courage, generosity and above all – religious piety and sincerity. But the loving inspiration and maternal cheer that the child had been so accustomed to, during these early years were to be disrupted prematurely, when his beloved mother died in 1912. Faisal would have been only 7 years of age.

Like a delicate but precious pearl, washed up on the desolate shores of grief and separation. Overwhelmed by the sweeping tides of orphanage, the young Prince soon found solace and serenity under the care of his maternal grandfather, who was an inspiration and a mentor for the tender soul.

During his years under the tutelage and guidance of his grandfather, Prince Faisal had learned to read The Noble Quran and began studying the principles of Islam, away from the distractions and comforts of his father's royal halls and magnificent palaces.

The pure environment, beneath the open skies of the desert terrain in which Faisal grew up during his formative years, would slowly engrain delicate but deep ties to the desert life and left an indelible mark upon the impressionable mind of the young Prince.



Faisal had no brothers of his own age to distract him from memorizing the Quran or from contemplating the profound teachings of the Prophet Muhammed (SalallAhu 'Aleihi wa Sallam).

Prince Faisal's experience was remarkable because unlike his brothers, he had lived with the desert dwellers and was learned in their traditions and knew their dialects. Furthermore, he understood the subtleties of classical Arabic poetry.

Faisal's childhood experiences in the open desert enabled him to learn how to ride horses, how to hunt with falcons, how to shoot rifles and even how to handle swords. In addition to these useful abilities, Faisal's uncles taught him military strategies and tactics as well as the customs and histories of the Arab tribes surrounding him. He was well versed in their heritage and knew about their blood feuds, he even learned to recognize the grazing patterns of each Bedouin tribe.



Above all, the young Prince was an ardent apprentice of desert diplomacy, which he had learnt directly from his father - King 'Abdul 'Aziz, the unrivalled champion. Consequently, these early experiences would serve the young Prince a great deal, in later years.

Prince Faisal was a unique product of the untainted environment of the open desert. As a son of the soil he understood the common dialects of his people and participated in everyday activities, from herding camels to shooting arrows in the wilderness. Faisal had surpassed his brothers in many respects and was perhaps one of the king's most promising children.

This was a sentiment that was evident from the king's expressions. King 'Abdul 'Aziz would make the following remark concerning his third son;

"I only wish I had 3 Faisals".



BEYOND THE DESERT KINGDOM

Faisal's brilliance and natural intelligence would soon be tested, when in 1919, the British government invited King 'Abdul 'Aziz to visit London on a diplomatic mission. However, with the recent death of the king's eldest son and with concerns over the domestic situation, the king sent his 14 year old son Faisal, to represent him.

This diplomatic assignment made Faisal the very first Saudi royal to visit the United Kingdom. He travelled with a cousin who was raised in Turkey, along with a merchant who spoke English. They were accompanied by several royal guards.



Yet despite his new surroundings and the alien culture that engrossed his 14 year old imagination, Faisal had not forgotten his upbringing in the desert heartland of Arabia. The morning following his arrival in the United Kingdom, Prince Faisal and his entourage were forcefully removed from their hotel room, after having made the morning call to prayers, thereby waking up the entire hotel.

Faisal spent all but five months in Britain wherein he met with high ranking British officials. During the same period, he also visited France where he was saluted as the first Saudi royal to pay an official visit there. Furthermore, during his stay in Britain - King George invited Prince Faisal and his entourage to Buckingham Palace in the spirit of hospitality.

However, when he was asked what he liked best about the United Kingdom, the young Prince Faisal replied that he particularly enjoyed;

"Riding up and down, the long escalators, in Piccadilly Circus".

The teenager learnt a few phrases in English and gained a fresh new insight into the world outside the desert kingdom, in fact, he became the country's de-facto Foreign minister at the age of 14 and he subsequently continued to serve as the kingdom's foreign representative for the rest of his life.



PRINCELY PASSIONS

Upon the death of King ‘Abdul ‘Aziz and the succession of Prince Faisal’s elder brother, King Saud, in 1953. Faisal was subsequently appointed to become the Crown Prince.

But by 1958, due to growing unrest concerning the new King’s financial ineptitude and policies, many members of the royal family, along with senior members of the religious establishment were actively calling for the appointment of Prince Faisal to the office of prime minister, thereby endorsing the motion that Prince Faisal should be granted wider executive powers to support his elder brother with his decision making.

Once appointed to the rank of prime minister, Prince Faisal initiated a massive financial reform that dramatically reduced unnecessary expenditure and lavish projects within the kingdom. Faisal had diligently worked to rescue the state treasury from bankruptcy. His policy of financial conservativeness was to become a symbol of his good judgement and earned him a reputation for prudence and moderation.

However, not long after his appointment, Prince Faisal was at the center of a power struggle between himself and the reigning monarch, King Saud. But on the 18th of December 1960, Prince Faisal resigned as prime minister expressing his concerns that King Saud was jeopardizing his financial reforms and reversing the positive impact of his policies.

King Saud thereafter revoked Faisal’s executive powers and appointed his other brother Prince Talal to the executive post of Finance minister.



TOWARDS A NEW SAUDI ARABIA

However by 1962, Prince Faisal rallied enough support from within the royal family to re-install himself as prime minister for a second time. It was during his second term as prime minister that Prince Faisal was successful in being able to cement his reputation as a reformer and an agent for development and modernization, within the kingdom.

Prince Faisal was the first Saudi monarch to introduce female education despite the consternation of many conservatives, in the traditional institutions. He challenged the social norms and championed the cause for women to achieve proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic.

A delegation of objectors soon approached Prince Faisal in an attempt to revoke his plans towards female education in the kingdom, their concerns were rebuffed by Faisal’s bold challenge to present just one verse in the Noble Quran wherein women were forbidden to read and write.

Prince Faisal’s wife was deeply involved in championing the cause for female affairs in general and female education, in particular. Prince Faisal also supported the establishment of the Islamic University of Madinah in 1961 and he endorsed the establishment of the Muslim World League in 1962.

KING AT LAST, DEVELOPMENT FIRST

In November 1964, Prince Faisal was designated to the throne in favor of his elder brother the former King Saud, but Prince Faisal is reported to have refused the honor three times until it was eventually forced upon him.

Upon his ascension to the throne, King Faisal still viewed the restoration of the country's finances as his main priority. He continued to pursue his judicious financial policies during the first years of his reign and his aims of balancing the country's budget eventually succeeded and was further advanced by an increase in oil production.

King Faisal now embarked on a full blown modernization program, the peak of his achievements was the establishment of a judicial system. Many universities were established or expanded during his rule. Many of the country's current ministries, government agencies and welfare programs were established during King Faisal's reign. He invested heavily in infrastructure, he also introduced policies such as agricultural and industrial subsidies as well as pension plans and social insurance programs for the Saudi work force.

When King Faisal ascended to the throne, there was only 317 Riyals in the royal treasury vault. A measly sum of little over \$50 US dollars. Therefore the King initiated a sweeping financial reform program that would limit and minimize excessive allowances that were previously granted to members of the royal family, at the expense of the public.



As a result of these courageous initiatives and measures, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was now on the road to financial stability and prosperity. King Faisal built many school and established several Mosques, he dug various wells in the Bedouin regions and spent his own money towards settling the debts and medical bills of local merchants and tribesmen. In fact, King Faisal spent 50 times more towards the educational budget in one year than had been previously spent by the administration before him.

In 1964 King Faisal hired the National Broadcast Company to set up 4 TV stations in Riyadh, Jeddah, Medina and Dammam. The first television broadcasts were officially transmitted in July 1965. But in 1966, an especially zealous nephew of King Faisal by the name of Khalid Ibn Musaid led a group of armed protesters in an attempt to destroy the television station in Riyadh. King Faisal had informed the officers to retaliate if the prince opened fire reminding them, reminding his people that no one was above the law, not even a prince.

When the police arrived to disperse the group, prince Khalid shot a security guard and was consequently shot back in retaliation and self-defense. The prince eventually died from the bullet. This incident would become the key trigger to a very tragic incident that would unfold a decade later. Yet despite the growing and relentless opposition movement from conservative factions within the kingdom. King Faisal continued to pursue his objectives and would always defend his policies by referring back to sound Islamic principles

THE PEOPLE'S PRINCE

However, unlike many of his contemporaries, King Faisal readily acknowledged his country's religious and cultural diversity, which included the predominantly Shia region of Ahsa in the east and the south western region of 'Asir. King Faisal's policies were inclusive and applied equally to the various religious sub-groups and denominations.

However, the dark stain of slavery was yet to vanish from the desert Kingdom, but within only two weeks of having been elected King, the laws were changed and on November the 6th in the year 1962, the institution of slavery was totally abolished in Saudi Arabia. King Faisal had long felt such conviction about this cause.

He previously stunned the American establishment upon visiting president Roosevelt in 1943, when he emphatically insisted that his black assistants should be seated on the same table and eat the same food that was served to him in an area of the restaurant that was reserved for whites only.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND REFORM

In an era of fiery Arab nationalism and popular communist revolutions, King Faisal was defiantly anti-Communist. He rejected all political advances from the Soviet Union declaring that Islam is completely incompatible with the Godless tenets of Communism. King Faisal associated Communism with Zionism, an ideology which he also criticized sharply.

King Faisal was an active advocate for Islamic unity. He sought to counter the influences of socialism and Arab Nationalism in the region by promoting pan-Islamism as an alternative.

King Faisal was also an ardent advocate for the Palestinian struggle, he used his authority and political voice to advance the message at an international level. In his famous speech, delivered at the UN in 1947, the king addressed the Western audience with the following proposition;

"If you want to be generous, then be generous with what you possess"

He urged the West not to treat Palestine

"As if that country had no owners and as if her rightful inhabitants had no say in the matter"

But for his courageous and sincere advocacy on behalf of the Palestinians, King Faisal was insulted, shoved, booed and spat upon by Jewish demonstrators in New York.

Yet after many failed diplomatic attempts, coupled with the sequential breaches of contract by the US and UN over the affairs of Palestine, King Faisal took matters into his own hands and made it clear that his concern for the Muslims in Palestine was not one of mere words alone. Soon, the world stopped taking oil for granted.

In October of 1973, the Yom Kippur war began, also known as the Arab-Israeli War. During this time King Faisal withdrew Saudi oil from the world markets as a strong sign of protest over the West's unrelenting and shameless support for Israel. King Faisal led the Arab oil embargo of 1973. This affirmative strategy increased the price of oil and was the primary contributing factor behind the 1973 energy crisis. It was to be the defining act of King Faisal's career, an action that gained him lasting prestige among many Muslims worldwide.

By the year 1974, he was named Time magazine's Man of the Year. The financial windfall generated by the oil crisis fueled the financial stream that continued to flow into the Saudi economy, long after his death. However, following the defeat of the united Arab forces in 1973, towards the end of the Arab-Israeli war King Faisal was never again seen to smile publicly, due to his grief and growing sadness over the state of Palestine and the loss of land inflicted on the indigenous population. The King thus encouraged Muslims to rise up and liberate the holy land in an historical and momentous speech.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

King Faisal was respected and highly regarded by his peers and contemporaries. He had invited Malcolm X to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a guest of the state and accorded him a generous and honorable reception for the duration of his pilgrimage in the holy land.

King Faisal also developed a close alliance with Pakistan where he is regarded highly for his foreign policies and his Islamic ideals. He was a very close friend of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the renowned prime minister of Pakistan, as well as General Muhammad Zia ul-Haqq.

In fact, Lyallpur, Pakistan's third largest city was renamed Faisalabad (lit. "City of Faisal") in 1979 to honor the legacy of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia.



THE PERSONAL LIFE OF A MONARCH

King Faisal's personal life was somewhat unique compared to his predecessors and to his contemporaries. The King had married two women before meeting his lifelong supporter and dedicated spouse, Queen Effat. She was a very educated young woman whom he had met in Turkey –she was fluent in French and was a very confident personality who became the first woman to be called and accepted as a Queen in Saudi Arabia. Together, they championed the education of females, having established the very first girl's schools in the Kingdom.

King Faisal's daily routine was very consistent, he woke up for morning prayers and knelt down with his servants in prostration before God. He habitually instructed people to address him as brother Faisal instead of his highness.

King Faisal also witnessed much of the outside world during his lifetime, he even took lessons in English and understood it enough to be able to correct his translators during interviews, yet despite this ability, he preferred to communicate in Arabic.

Faisal was also a deep reader who would be stationed behind his desk consuming information sometimes six or seven days in a row. He never lost his composure and was known to say;

"God gave us two ears and one tongue, that we should listen twice as much as we talk"

And by the end of 1974, Times magazine named King Faisal its "Man of the year". Reporters described him as dour, ascetic and shrewd.



But within days, of this article having been printed, King Faisal reportedly had two distinctive dreams. Ominously, both were to prove true in the following months.

In one of his dreams, he was informed by his grandmother that it was time to meet his mother who had died when he was only seven years old. In his second dream, he saw his grandfather, his sister and his oldest brother - they all forced him into a car and drove away.

Upon relating his dreams to his aunt, he expressed his concern that he did not think he would live to see the end of the new-year.

THE FINAL HOUR

On March the 25th in the year 1975, King Faisal arrived in his office at 10:25am to meet Kuwait's new oil minister who was waiting in a side room next to the King's office. Along with the oil minister was the Saudi finance minister, Zaki Al Yamani and a young Saudi prince who snuck into the waiting room with the two senior dignitaries.

When the door to King Faisal's office was opened at 10:32am, the young prince walked in behind the two ministers and as King Faisal leaned over to embrace his young nephew, at that very instant the young man took out a pistol and shot six rounds at close range.

The first shot hit the King's chin, piercing his throat and ripping through his jugular vein. The second bullet went through his ear and grazed his temple. The King's dreams had come to light, he was assassinated by his own nephew.



King Faisal was quickly taken to the hospital while still alive, as the doctors massaged his heart while giving him blood transfusions. However, due to the severity of the injuries, the doctors were unsuccessful in their operation and King Faisal died, shortly thereafter.

It is reported that both before and after the shooting, King Faisal remained calm.

Later that day, a radio newscaster held his tears back long enough to tell the nation that King Faisal had been brutally assassinated. Following the murder of King Faisal, the city of Riyadh observed three days of mourning and all government activities were at a standstill.

The assassin was prince Faisal Al Musaid, a twenty four years old graduate returning from the USA. He was in fact the younger brother of prince Khalid Al Musaid, the prince who was shot dead in 1966 outside the television station in Riyadh, as he led an armed assault against the guards. The assassin was captured directly after the attack and the nation's high religious court convicted him of murder, he was subsequently sentenced to be executed despite King Faisal's dying request that the life of his assassin should be spared.

Within Saudi Arabia and in the wider Muslim world at large, it is commonly believed that King Faisal's oil boycott was the real cause of his assassination and that the young assassin was a willing agent, acting on behalf of foreign forces.

THE LEGACY OF KING FAISAL

King Faisal's body was buried a day following his death. He was laid to rest in an unmarked grave at Al- Oud cemetery in Riyadh, on March the 26th in the year 1975.

His legacy burns bright in the heart of every Saudi citizen and his valiant call for justice rings throughout the heartland of Islam. King Faisal's sincere call for a unified Muslim world based on one book, one identity, one God - will one day be realized by the true inheritors of his struggle.

King Faisal Ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud was a reformer, a liberator, a champion for female education and a courageous advocate for the Palestinian cause. He lived as he died, upon firm principles and upon deep conviction. He loved his Muslim brothers and did his best to create a better society for his people.

May Allah grant King Faisal a spacious dwelling in Paradise and reward him for his struggles, on the path to Islamic Unity.

AHMED HOOSEN DEEDAT (1918–2005)

THE GOLDEN YEARS

THE OLD HOMELAND

Ahmed Hoosen Deedat was born in India, on July the 1st in the year 1918. His family resided in the district of Surat. Shortly after his birth, his father, Hoosen Deedat, pursued new employment opportunities in the growing economy of South Africa, where he soon found employment as a tailor. Hoosen Deedat made the difficult yet courageous choice of leaving his infant son Ahmed, in the loving and vigilant guardianship of his mother back in India. The young Ahmed Deedat would not be reunited with his father until nine years later.

When the situation was more favorable and his status grew more stable, Hoosen Deedat arranged for his young son to join him in South Africa and that was when Ahmed Deedat obtained his first passport, which was issued by the British colonial administration.



A VOYAGE BEYOND THE HORIZON

Ahmed's journey across the continent was to mark a sequence of curious encounters and exciting new experiences for the nine year old adventurer. He travelled to South Africa unaccompanied by any adult on this long and challenging sea voyage.

By the Grace of God, the young lad arrived safely in in South Africa in August 1927. But just a few days prior to his arrival, the South African government had set a strict and final deadline after which no unaccompanied youngster would be admitted within the borders unless they were accompanied by their mothers. As fate would have it, Ahmed Deedat arrived at Durban's shipping harbor only twenty four hours too late, the deadline had expired and the new law had come into full effect – this meant that Ahmed Deedat and all the children on board of the ship would be repatriated to India unless they were accompanied by their mothers. Unfortunately for Ahmed, he was unaccompanied by any adult so the authorities were obliged to send him back to India, however, his father adamant that no such thing would happen.

Ahmed's father, Hoosen Deedat, was a resolute and firm man who would not take no for an answer, in a moment that would set the course of history for Islam in South Africa, Hoosen Deedat held the tender hand of his nine year old son and defiantly walked past the customs officers.

By the Will of Allah, Ahmed Deedat was the only child that day, to have been admitted into the country, all of the others were repatriated back to India. Hoosen Deedat found a great admirer in his young son Ahmed, perhaps his confidence and strength of character had contributed towards the courage and confidence that would become the hallmarks of Ahmed Deedat in years to come.

GETTING FROM A TO Z

Ahmed was enrolled at the Anjuman School in central Durban. Yet despite his lack of prior training in the English language and literature, the young pupil soon caught up and surpassed his classmates and went on to become an exemplary student topping all his class mates, in just six months.

Yet his bright prospects and dazzling ambitions would be darkened by the dark clouds of separation and loss that engulfed the young hopeful when news of his mother's death reached him in South Africa. Ahmed's mother had only survived a few months following his journey to South Africa, unbeknown to either of them, they were never to see one another again following his departure.

The young Ahmed's emotional losses were soon to take on a financial dimension, when he found himself shouldering a mountainous load of worries and concerns at the tender age of 10 years old, uncertain as to the future continuation of his studies.

The strains from this painful predicament soon became apparent on the face of Ahmed Deedat, the traces of concern and stress caught the attention of a local businessman who approached the young orphan and reassured him that his school fees would continue to be paid if only he returned to school and stopped worrying about the fees.

Upon returning to school, Ahmed Deedat was confronted by his teacher and his school fees were at once demanded, to this request, Ahmed Deedat responded full of confidence and in all sincerity that he would return to school with his fees. However, unbeknown to him at the time, the promises that were made to him were only a cruel form of entertainment and a vicious string of lies and deception. The businessman told Ahmed that he was only joking, in actuality, he did not intend to sponsor the young orphan's education in the first place, it was all just a joke.

As tragic as this was, the young Ahmed was soon to experience more hardship when his father was forced to discontinue the school payments and to take him out of school due to the aforementioned financial circumstances.



Like millions of prepubescent boys of that era, the young Ahmed was now obliged to take a trade, he found his vocation thirty kilometers outside of the city of Durban, in a quaint local country store known as "Adam's Mission station", which was noticeably positioned opposite a missionary center. A formation center where young African missionaries were recruited and trained to evangelize to the local populations.

These students would frequent the shop, and preach to Ahmed, using him as some sort of a "guinea pig", they tested all of their techniques on the staff at the store, many of whom were Muslim by faith – but were totally clueless as to what this faith actually meant. Seeing this state of vulnerability and susceptibility, the young missionaries would fire various questions and challenged the Muslim shop workers with all sorts of refutations against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (Salallahu 'aleihi wa Sallam).

This routine would be continuous, and would be repeated daily. The ordeal reached such a level that despite the difficulties in finding gainful employment in those days, Ahmed Deedat began to seriously consider quitting his job to escape the constant taunts and challenges from the young missionaries.

THE TRUTH REVEALED

Knowing little more than the testimony of faith and a few minor details about Islam, Ahmed Deedat found himself unable and incapable of defending his beliefs as the challenges and attacks mounted on a daily basis, yet he felt what was a growing desire and an overwhelming inner sentiment that pushed him to seek some sort of enlightenment and clarification regarding these matters.

But unbeknown to him, all the answers he was looking for were to be found right where he was stationed. The enlightening moment was final unraveled when the young assistant began rummaging through his bosses warehouse in search of interesting reading material, it was then that he discovered a worm eaten book that would change the course of his life forever.



The book was old and dusty, and upon wiping away the dirt from its old covers, the book's title was revealed – it had an Arabic type with the following words inscribed beneath it, “Izhaar-ul-Haqq” which translates in English as “The Truth revealed”. The book had a publication date of 1915 and was printed in India.

As if some sort of answer to his quest for information, Ahmed Deedat soon realized that the contents of this book provided him with direct and elaborate answers to all of the questions that were clouding his mind. In fact, the entire book was an account of various encounters between the Christian missionaries that had been sent to India to evangelize the gospel and convert the Muslim populace using various strategies and arguments for the cause. The contents of the book also documented various accounts and details of spectacular debates that took place between the Muslim scholars of the sub-continent against the missionary professors that would challenge them to public debates in the native language.

Fired up with the zeal and enthusiasm of learning and discovery, it was in that very hour that that Ahmed Deedat began to learn the answers he was so in need of, as he flickered through pages with passion and persistence, his fervor was matched by the depth and brilliance of the arguments and logical answers presented by the Muslim author.

More than providing a goldmine of information, the book had sparked a deep interest and inspired the young man to begin a lifelong quest seeking knowledge and facts about the various religious manuscripts written from an Islamic perspective, but more importantly, the book had re-attached him to Islam, he began reading the Quran and memorizing its beautiful verses all while conducting his own research into the Bible and the new testament. He subsequently purchased his first bible and began indexing the verses as part of his own growing portfolio of research.

THE TURNING TIDES

Soon, Ahmed Deedat would begin engaging the young missionaries that frequented his store for debates and one by one, they would cease to visit the store when they were confronted with the brilliant and logical arguments from the young Ahmed.

Now motivated and enthusiastic in his position, Ahmed Deedat left the store and decided to visit a local Bible studies class that was being delivered by an English convert to Islam, Mr Fairfax. Ahmed Deedat attended the lectures with enthusiasm and learnt much about comparative religion and biblical sciences. A few months had passed and Mr Fairfax ceased to attend, the students were saddened by his absence and Ahmed Deedat stood in on his behalf, his style and charisma was so brilliant that he eventually continued teaching the class for a further 3 years.

PIVOTAL PLATFORMS

Gone were the days when Ahmed Deedat would be swamped by questions and challenges from local missionaries that visited the store and gone were the days of timid responses and half-hearted attempts to defend his faith. Ahmed Deedat now began to challenge the missionaries regarding the validity and veracity of their own scripture, this he did skillfully and eloquently with a fluency and authoritative tone that soon drove the missionaries away from the store altogether.

Following his successful engagements with the missionaries, Ahmed Deedat began to seek a new platform for his thought provoking questions and his call to Islam. He pioneered new and unheard of approaches to the traditional means of propagating Islam, he was one of the firsts proponents to place open adverts in the local English newspapers in defense of Islam. This was unique and unheard of during the British colonial rule – he soon purchased an English translation of the Noble Quran by Yusuf Ali and began to memorize its chapters and verses, this was to be his greatest and more prized investment. The Quran became his inspiration and he drew all of his love and motivation from its luminous verses.



AL-SALAAM IS BORN

Dawah – or the Islamic call and propagation - began to dominate his life, Ahmed Deedat was soon invited to Cape Town, where he lectured in huge halls, attracting crowds of over forty thousand people. He raised the morale of the Malay people in the Cape, who had been feeling disillusioned and downtrodden by the dominant Eurocentric culture in South Africa.

During his rise to fame, Ahmed Deedat was approached by a man known as Hajjee Kadwa following one of his open lectures. The wealthy patron extended an open offer of seventy five acres of land, which would all be donated to Ahmed Deedat's organisation in order to assist them in their work and development.

This came as a major breakthrough for the Sheikh and his administrative team. He seized the opportunity and moved to the South Coast of Natal, with his family, to establish and run the new organization, which he named As-Salaam. As-Salaam was dedicated to teaching comparative religion, students also learnt how to clarify misconceptions and to deliver the pure teachings of Islam to non-Muslim audiences.

TOWARDS BRIGHTER CONSTELLATIONS

By the year 1973, the project had run out of steam and Ahmed Deedat was confronted with dwindling financial resources and an over stretched workload. As-Salaam had not developed into the multi-national development agency that was originally envisioned, so after 17 years of faithful service and continuous effort towards the project, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat cordially resigned from his post as a leading authority in As-Salaam.

However, where a door was shut, several windows of opportunity were soon to open for the Sheikh. He soon found himself immersed in the development of a new and more ambitious project. The Islamic Propagation Centre International (The IPCI) was subsequently founded and directed by Ahmed Deedat in the weeks and months that followed his resignation from As-Salaam, here he aimed at internationalizing the Dawah to reach a broader audience and to make a greater impact.

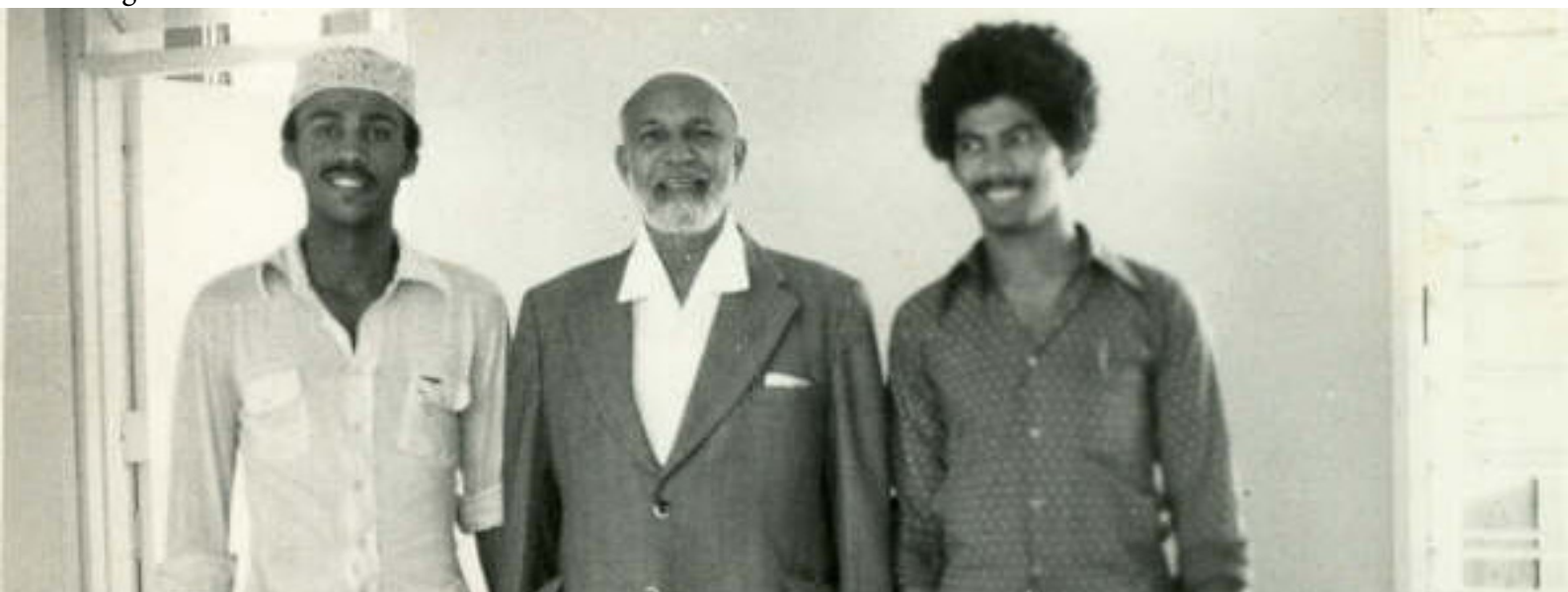
The Sheikh soon realized the objectives of his international ambitions when he set off for his first trip to the Arab world in 1976. He was accompanied by a close friend of his, Ebrahim Jadwat, the two travelled to Riyadh for an Islamic conference.

Ebrahim Jadwat attended the conference with the intention to elicit some interest in Ahmed Deedat at a time when he was little known in the Arab world, upon prompting some of the Arab journalists to interview Ahmed Deedat, he was met with indifference and a genuine lack of interest, some even laughed and noted the fact that with so many famous Sheikhs in Saudi Arabia, what need did they have to interview an unknown man from South Africa. But driven by a tenacious and tireless conviction in Ahmed Deedat's unique talent, Ebrahim Jadwat eventually convinced the Saudi Broadcasters to interview Ahmed Deedat for 2 minutes, the rest – as they say, is history.

Sheikh Deedat with his entertaining approach, dynamic personality, deep knowledge of Christianity, swept the Arab world off its feet. Going to Riyadh opened up many doors for him, and his dream of printing and distributing the Qur'an and other literature soon became a reality.

Ahmed Deedat was a pioneer of contemporary mass Dawah, he was ahead of his time in his diverse strategies to deliver the message to a modern audience, he directly challenged the Christian missionary movement in the Muslim world and paved the way for a new generation of Muslim thinkers and activists.

His tireless efforts to propagate the pristine message of Islam resulted in many outstanding achievements, during his lifetime, the IPCI printed thousands of Noble Qurans which were distributed worldwide, his organisation printed various books and titles and produced lengthy cassettes which were circulated across the globe, but perhaps – Ahmed Deedat was most noted for his ground breaking lectures which were organized and delivered all over the world.



THE GREAT DEBATE

In November 1986, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat's greatest debate was anticipated on both sides of the Atlantic. He had agreed to participate in an historic debate with the American missionary and famed televangelist, the reverend Jimmy Swaggart. The debate was entitled "Is the Bible the Word of God?" it was to be held at Reverend Swaggart's hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The event was much anticipated attracting an audience of eight thousand people. In fact, Ahmed Deedat's bold and daring challenge in the reverend's home town was foreseen by some people as being almost Davidian against the Goliath powerhouse of Reverend Jimmy Swaggart, who headed a one hundred million dollar ministry and one of the largest evangelist churches in the world – in fact, the odds were stacked so heavily against Sheikh Ahmed Deedat that his very own son, Yusuf Deedat, began to dissuade his father from debating Jimmy Swaggart several times.

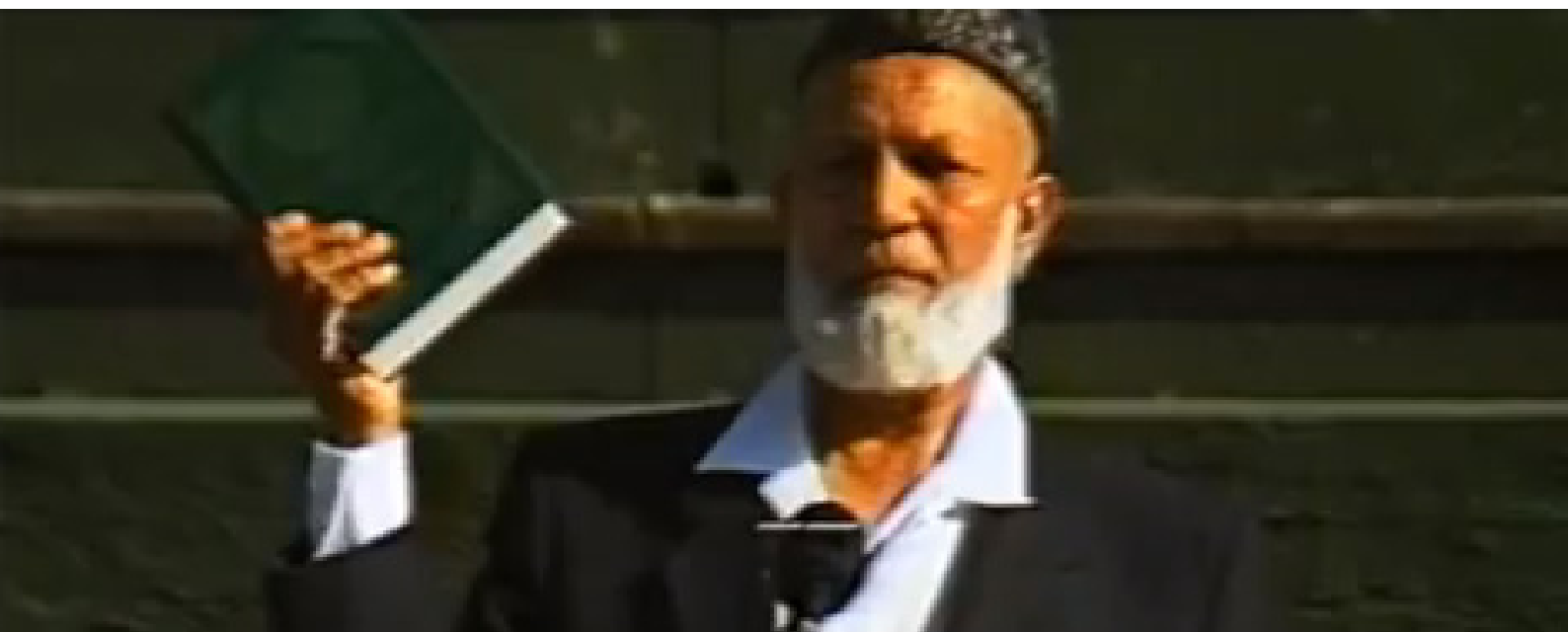
But the date was set, the tickets were sold out and the anticipation was sky high. Not only did this mark one of the most famous interfaith encounters in modern history, but it was a pivotal moment in the Muslim world, the confrontation between the East and the Western ideological struggle and a meeting of minds. The debate on whether the Bible was the veritable word of God had come to symbolize a debate of epic proportions, the event was duly renamed the "Great Debate."



The outcome of this momentous debate took the world by surprise and overwhelmed countless spectators across the world. By the Will of Allah, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat defeated the seasoned American evangelist in a captivating exchange of words and an eloquent presentation of evidence and logical deductions in support of the Muslim perspective.

The outcome of this debate propelled Ahmed Deedat to new heights in his career, he was swept up in a whirlwind of tours, visiting and lecturing in numerous countries.





THE LEGENDARY IMPACT OF DEEDAT DAWAH

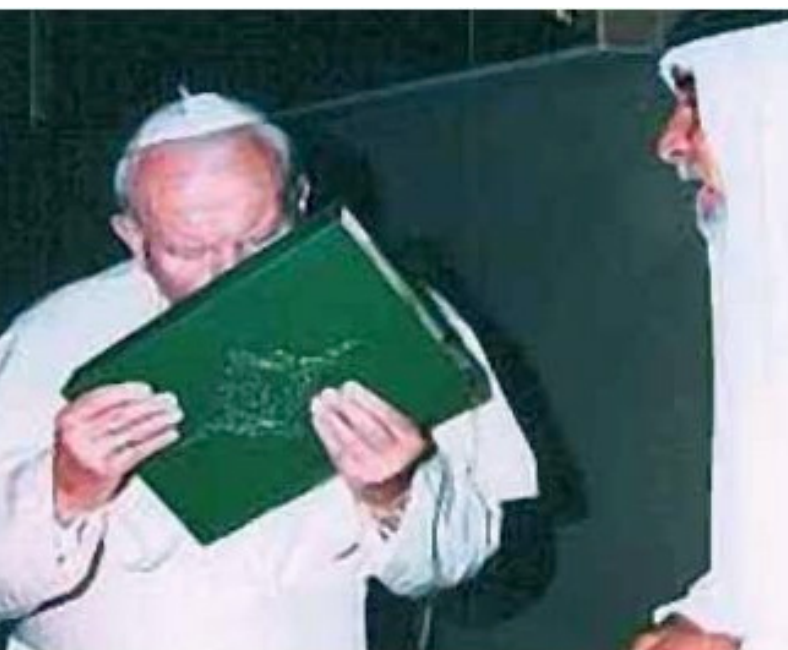
With his new status and achievements in the field of Islamic Propagation, Ahmed Deedat's organisation, the IPCI expanded its activities and its premises, moving to a larger building and servicing a growing global audience.

In 1986, the Saudi administration awarded Ahmed Deedat by honoring him with the prestigious King Faisal International Prize for Service of Islam.

Ahmed Deedat's style and charisma influenced a new generation of Muslim thinkers and defenders of the faith, perhaps one of the most prominent students of the late Sheikh is Dr Zakir Naik, who owes a great debt of gratitude to the late sheikh

At the height for his fame and influence, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat was in contact with several leaders and men of influence, he was reported to have even received a personal phone call from the late President, Nelson Mandela - who happened to be on a state visit in Saudi Arabia at the time. The president had called Ahmed Deedat to congratulate him for his international icon status in the Muslim World.

In 1984 Sheikh Ahmed Deedat even challenged the Pope to a public debate in the Vatican Square, but the Pope did not accept.



THE SWAN SONG

Ahmed Deedat, was the father of modern day inter-faith dialogue and debate within the Muslim world. His world tours guaranteed packed auditoriums and energized countless communities to defend their faith in the most eloquent and convincing of ways, by understanding and quoting the luminous verses of the Noble Quran.

Just when his fame grew to wondrous proportions and his following began to grow internationally, the Sheikh's career came to an abrupt stop in 1996, when he delivered his last lecture in Sydney, Australia. The lecture was considered to be one of his most passionate talks.

On May the 3rd 1996, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat suffered a severe stroke, known as "lock in syndrome" the effect of this stroke left him paralyzed from the neck down. He was no longer able to speak or swallow, in fact – concerns grew so high that several doctors began to inform the Deedat family that the great man only had 10 days left to live.

Upon receiving this devastating news, Yusuf Deedat, the son of Ahmed Deedat - returned home and began to make a series of urgent calls to his contacts in Saudi Arabia. Following a number of calls, Ahmed Deedat was taken to Saudi Arabia on a medical jet, which was dispatched by the Saudi royal family. Ahmed Deedat spent the next 10 months in a highly specialized unit at the King Faisal hospital in Riyadh, where he was trained to use special machines to communicate with eye movements. The Saudi government had even appointed a specialist neurologist from Germany to take care of Ahmed Deedat.

Following his return home from Saudi Arabia, Ahmed Deedat spent the next nine years of his life bed-bound in his South African home. Sheikh Ahmed Deedat's greatest battle came to an end on August the 8th in the year 2005, when the disease had totally weakened his body and eventually claimed his life.

COURAGE HAS A FACE

The legacy that Sheikh Ahmed Hoosen Deedat left behind extends towards the entire Muslim Ummah.

Thousands of people, from across South Africa, participated in the funeral of Sheikh Ahmed Deedat. They came from near and far to pay their last respects to the man who had made them proud, a man who at a time when the Muslim community had everything going against it, singlehandedly raised their morale and made them proud to be Muslims again, a man whose voice, courage and conviction served as a piercing ray of light amidst the blinding shadows of confusion, doubt and ignorance.

May Allah grant Sheikh Ahmed Deedat a most beautiful and ready audience in the palaces of Paradise.



PRESIDENT ALIJA IZETBEGOVIĆ (1925–2003)

SUNSHINE IN SARAJEVO

MORNING SUN SHINES THROUGH THE DARK

Alija Izetbegović, the heroic president of Bosnia Herzegovina was born on the 8th of August 1925 in the North Eastern municipality of Bosanski Samac, located on the right bank of the river Sava.

The Izetbegovićs did not live in Bosanski Samac long enough to see Alija grow up in his town of birth, in fact within two years of his arrival the entire family relocated to Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia. Here, the young Alija identified strongly with the culture and norms of the city – in fact, in later life he would cite Sarajevo as his place of origin although he was born elsewhere.

Alija's childhood era was one of defeat and grim fortune for the Islamic world, he was born within 2 years of the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate which resulted in the separation and weakening of the Muslim world, this physical defeat was further aggravated by the intellectual, cultural and ideological invasions of colonial entities that subsequently ravaged and flooded the Muslim world with socialism, atheism and secularism.

SARAJEVO MY LOVE

In Sarajevo, the young Alija completed his preliminary education and went on to enroll into the gymnasium. He was particularly affectionate towards his mother and expressed his great love towards her, while he expressed his respect and esteem for his father.



GLOWING SUNRAYS

Alija Izetbegović grew up in the midst of a societal transformation. As a Muslim living under the new order of rule, now directly influenced by the Judeo-Christian Europe – Alija discovered the great literary classics of the Western tradition. At the age of eighteen he was reading conventional texts such as Immanuel Kant's "Critique of pure Reason", he studied Oswald Spengler's "Decline of the West" and even explored Henri Bergson's subversive narrative in his novel book "Creative Evolution".

While none of the classics were easily digested by the young Alija Izetbegović, he built up enough of an appetite and curiosity in philosophy to begin his higher education in that field of study. However later on he changed his course and directed his attention towards the study of Agronomy, but eventually he opted to read Law, a subject that he graduated in within 2 years instead of the standard 4 years normally required. He soon landed a job as a legal advisor within a construction company.

THE YOUNG MUSLIMS

Alija Izetbegović's family background was a religious one despite having grown up in a predominantly communist era. Aged around twenty years old, Alija Izetbegovic was due to join the military and participate in the world war however he escaped the draft.

But during the final phase of world war one, the young and attentive Alija began to explore the ideas of a group of men who were raised in the city, they came to be known as the "Young Muslims". Their party manifesto was anti-Fascist and anti-Communist. It was from his early interaction and involvement with this group that Alija Izetbegovic formed his initial political views.



However, Alija Izetbegovic's involvement with the Young Muslims and his commitment to the cause soon caught the attentive eye of the ruling authorities and within a year he was arrested and jailed by the Communist party. He was only twenty one years of age when he received this sentence and he spent the next three years in prison between 1946 to 1949.

Altogether, the Young Muslims were sentenced to a total prison term of over a thousand years, while seventeen of its members were executed with capital punishment.

THE CLOUDS GATHER IN THE HORIZON

His life in jail was hard and laborious, he spent his time performing exhaustive manual labor such as chopping wood, but when his sentence expired and he was granted his freedom once more, Alija Izetbegovic re-emerged into a society that had fallen into total disarray.

The country's economic prospects were abysmal and many of its citizens were out of work, poverty levels were crippling the nation and starvation became rampant in the less affluent regions. Yet quite predictably, members of the elite and higher social ranks maintained the privileged status and felt little if any of the repercussions within Bosnia. They enjoyed many luxuries and had access to a wide range of commodities and services.

POLITICAL THOUGHT AND PUBLICATION

Alija Izetbegovic, like many of his dispirited countrymen - had been failed by the Socialist ideology - the privileged few still thrived and oppression of the masses was still alive and kicking.

The two opposing factions of capitalism and communism were both rooted in an ungodly materialism that alienated and repelled young Muslim thinkers like Alija Izetbegovic. In the months and years that followed his release from prison, Alija Izetbegovic began to delve into Islamic legal theory and studied the Shariah in search of a more equitable and just form of government for his fellow compatriots - he was looking for a system that would safeguard the rights of the common citizen while protecting the property of the privileged few, it had to be an equitable and reliable form of government that prioritized justice and truth far above the interests and preferential treatment of the ruling elite.

By the year 1970, Alija Izetbegovic had formulated his revised political manifesto and published his thoughts in a book entitled "The Islamic Declaration". In this impassioned and profound political manuscript, the author submits his view that it is only Islam and its systematic code of law that can govern over and recharge the collective heart and soul of the defeated Muslim masses, he stressed the point that it is only Islam as a ruling system that can motivate and animate the Muslim nation into reclaiming her rightful place in the high ranks of leadership and in the corridors of power.

In time, Alija Izetbegovic would launch an intellectual and academic campaign to win the hearts and minds of the general masses. He advocated the need for more educational opportunities for women and minorities in society.



His thoughts and theories eventually culminated in the publication of his Magnum opus, the book that earned him respect and consideration among the political and intellectual circles of the day "Islam between East and West" was to become the book in which Alija Izetbegovic would posit his political thought and advance his solution for the Muslim population native to Yugoslavia, the book was published in the year 1984. The book identifies a new medium and a new political plateau upon which the Muslim ideologue sought to operate from, he contended that Islam is neither of the East nor of the West but of the middle.

According to Alija Izetbegovic, Islamic thought and identity occupied a central and balanced medium, not only were the Muslims of Yugoslavia geographically situated in a meeting point between Europe and the East, but the ideology and methodology of Islam was in itself a balanced and middle path, it was neither a right wing agenda nor was it left wing policy - it was a middle and balanced way of life and a just system of governance, the very antithesis to the extremism and totalitarian rule of Capitalism, Fascism and Communism.

PREDICTING THE WEATHER

Around the same time as his book was published, Alija Izetbegovic had earned himself a reputation and was a highly placed political figure in society. His success and appeal within the Muslim intelligentsia and within the wider political realm brought him some undesirable attention from opponents and members of the ruling classes.

It was in March 1983 that Alija Izetbegovic received a second term in jail, this time he was sentenced to fourteen long years, however his fame and reputation fueled large protests around the world as admirers and supported objected to the unfair and arbitrary maltreatment he had received in court and in jail. Caving into the demands of protesters and demonstrators, the authorities suspended his fourteen year sentence and released him early, he walked out into freedom once more in the year 1988.

However, like his experience of leaving jail in his early twenties, the country he returned to after his most recent term in jail, was sadly falling apart. The next few years brought significant revolutions and power shifts within the globally political arena.



Most significant amongst these changes was the sudden dissolution of the Warsaw pact between Socialist member states, while in Germany - the Berlin wall had been demolished. This was followed by the fact that in many other European countries the iron grip of Communism had been dismantled. These changes extended to Alija Izetbegovic's native Yugoslavia, which was also split during that period of time.

It was in 1989, under the shade of this most recent wave of change, that Alija Izetbegovic took the opportunity to form a distinct political alliance in Bosnia, it became known as the Party for Democratic Action and in the year 1990 – the first time multi-party politics were allowed in Yugoslavia, Alija Izetbegovic's party won a large portion of the votes and he was elected President of Bosnia.

In January 1992, Portuguese diplomat José Cutileiro drafted a plan, later known as the Lisbon Agreement, that would turn Bosnia into a tri-ethnic state that would be home to Bosnians, Serbs and Croats, but less than two weeks following the proposal, President Alija Izetbegovic withdrew his consent and expressed his concerns over having a country that was divided into ethnic lines, he preferred a multi-cultural Bosnia.

ON THE BRINK OF WAR

Following the tragic and colossal loss of human life that resulted from Europe's two world wars, the allied forces were confronted with the barbarity and inhumanity of what the German troops had inflicted on the Jews at their concentration camps.

News of the horrific genocide and wholesale murder of a people shook the world and as humanity was awakened to the brutal savagery that was allowed to unfold in the very heart of Europe and with a unanimous proclamation and condemnation of the terrible act, world leaders all vowed that such grotesque and colossal crimes against humanity would never be allowed to happen again – Jews and sympathizers all over the world vowed “Never again!”.



Yet less than half a century from the tragic events in Germany, another genocide was slowly unfolding within the European continent, mass killings and rape camps were appearing right in front of the leaders who had once vowed “Never Again!”.

Bosnia, although European in geographical terms, was nevertheless part of the a different order of rule for almost six centuries. It was once part of the Ottoman Caliphate before being absorbed into the Austrian administration and finally recognized as a member state of Yugoslavia.

However, with the sudden collapse and dissolution of many socialist and communist states in Europe, the Bosnian people suffered from the conflict and war that came as a result of the mounting xenophobic tensions between Bosnian Muslims on one side and Christian Serbs and Croats on the other. The war was somewhat predictable, xenophobic resentment and religious hatred reached boiled point beneath the thin layer of legislation that held things together for a while, but when the raging flames of war were finally ignited, the entire corpus of Muslim citizens were confronted with a brutal campaign of genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape and torture.

Men were separated from their mothers, daughters and wives only to be slaughtered like cattle and the women were rounded up and transported to make-shift camps where they would be systematically and repeatedly raped and violated until they died or fell pregnant to their merciless captors – rape was as much a weapon of war as any bomb or rifle.



This was a dire and difficult situation for the Muslims in Bosnia - since the Yugoslav army was predominantly staffed by Christian Serbs and Croats and the army was the fourth largest European military of its day. Desolately, the largely unarmed and untrained Muslim civilian population was virtually helpless and unable to resist or retaliate against the overwhelming force of the Christian Serbs and Croats who fell upon them like hungry wolves. Shamefully, the world stood by and observed while this most tragic series of events was being reported by primetime media outlets almost daily.

Yet despite the meagre resources and the huge obstacles in front of Alija Izetbegovic and his supporters, he was a courageous leader, a motivator, a strategist and civil administrator. During times of severe oppression and hardship, his military leadership and diplomatic abilities kept the nation together till the very end. Sarajevo, the dear and beloved capital city of Bosnia and the place where Alija Izetbegovic proudly called home was eventually barricaded and kept under siege by the Serbs for an extended period.

The besieged Muslim population was deprived of all electricity and water supply - while the Serb forces were strategically positioned in neighboring hills and highland from where they constantly launched bombs and fired grenades onto the civilian enclave.



The excessive and murderous Serbian campaign reached its lowest and most appalling point on August the 27th in the year 1995, when the small market of Markale was decimated and totally destroyed by bombs being fired over-hill. This act of uninhibited terrorism gained much publicity and media exposition as an intolerable assault on innocent life that provoked worldwide outrage and forced the leading nations to intervene and take some action.

Within just a few days, the Serbian fighters were targeted by air strikes and their grip on Sarajevo was over.



BEHIND THE THUNDER

Though the war was eventually discontinued and some of the key perpetrators of the mass killings and systematic rape were apprehended and brought to justice, the stains of war are still visible in modern Bosnia. Though many would perceive President Alija Izetbegovic's war as one against the Serbs and Croats, the true analysis of the entire tragedy in Bosnia will reveal that a great portion of his struggle for justice was sabotaged by Western nations and so called helpers.

The Dayton peace accord was a peace treaty that was being used to broker a ceasefire between the two sides but in actuality it was a means by which the Bosnian people would be paralyzed and incapacitated, many of the terms in the treaty were unfavorable and caused further disadvantage to the Bosnians.

President Izetbegovic described the treaty as a blackmail and an attempt to twist his arm, the terms subjected his people to the acceptance of Serbian oppression while the Serbs were constantly breaking the agreed terms yet they were not censured for their treachery.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the case of Srebrenica, today this name has become a marker than will never be effaced from the blood stained face of humanity. In 1993, the UN declared Srebrenica to be a safe area wherein no fighting was to be tolerated, civilians were guaranteed safety and security from Serbian aggression, so long as they remained within the vicinity of Srebrenica.



Yet despite the peace treaty that was agreed between both parties, the area was still under siege by the Serb forces who continued to rain bombs and mortar on the civilians seeking shelter in the safe zone, this continued despite the UN warnings issued to the Serbian commanders. This contravention of the agreed peace treaty continued until early July when a dreadful attack took place while UN troops stationed at Srebrenica simply turned a blind eye to the tragedy.

Within days of this attack, a further seven thousand innocents were butchered and the UN did nothing to prevent or repel the relentless Serbian attacks. It has been reported from reliable sources that verified intelligence was available to the UN headquarters through the use of satellite images, so they were fully aware of the preparations and of the subsequent strikes coming from the Serbian camp, yet no actions were taken. In fact, so apathetic were the peace keeping forces to the whole tragedy, that when the Dutch military - who were responsible for safeguarding Srebrenica - were confronted by the Serbian forces, they readily surrendered and allowed the genocide to continue.

THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

Sadly, faced with an unsurmountable military opponent and overwhelmingly adverse terms for a so called peace treaty, President Alija Izetbegovic drew close to the negotiating table and agreed to sign the peace treaty, despite the huge injustice that was being committed to the Bosnian people.

Upon returning to his people he told them that although the terms of the peace treaty were not at all just, it was better than the continual state of warfare. Ultimately, the Bosnian people retained their homeland with Bosnia-Herzegovina surviving the war and maintaining its capital Sarajevo, however this came at a tremendous cost to the country as it was totally land locked and had little access to the ports.



The war may have been terminated but the horrors continue to haunt the Bosnian psyche. Though President Alija Izetbegovic demonstrated exceptional courage and resilience in the face of a wholly corrupt and heartless oppressor, Justice for the Bosnian people is still incomplete, many of the Serbs who were charged with major war crimes - have gone unpunished, including Milosevic - who died while still under trial. Many more continue to find safe havens with sympathetic allies and anti-Islamic regimes. Though the flames of war were finally extinguished, it may take many generations before the people of Bosnia can reclaim the justice that they have so unashamedly been stripped of.

GLORIOUS SUNSET

President Alija Izetbegovic's decision to accept a lesser form of tyranny and injustice may be seen by many critics as a demonstration of weakness if not even cowardice, but the opinions of sheep do not deprive a lion of his sleep.

Alija Izetbegovic stood firm in the face of an almost unimaginable opponent that was made stronger with the complicity and cowardice of the international community who watched as the atrocities against the Bosnian people unfolded before their very eyes.

Like the treaty of Hudaibiyah between the Prophet Muhammad (Salallahu 'aleihi wa Sallam) and the oppressive Quraishi leadership. Many would view the terms as being one sided and unfavorable for the Muslims yet they fail to see the Wisdom and favor of God in that he granted the Muslims leaders that were prepared to sacrifice their political lives in order for their people to live – Peace has always been the objective of any great leader, even if it comes in the form of a temporary defeat.

What Alija Izetbegovic reminded the Muslim world and the world at large is that true conquest lies in one's ability to preserve lives, not in the contest to see who can take as many lives as possible – and that true leadership and real strength is in one's ability to broker peace and break the cycle of violence, even in times of severe adversity.

On March the 3rd in the year 1992, after the breakup of Yugoslavia into many component parts of the federation, Bosnia declared independence, along with other parts of the federation and was recognized as such by both the EU and the UN.

President Alija Izetbegovic lived to see a free Bosnia, an independent people and a new hope for peace and justice. After a life long struggle to defend and protect the rights of his people and the sanctity of their faith and religion, Alija Izetbegovic died on October 19th in the year 2003, he was aged 78.



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